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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

AUG 7 ISSUE #88
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CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 1978.....Implementation of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 is on schedule. Verlon Vrana, Assistant Administrator for Management, SCS, is on detail to the Office of Personnel assisting in the implementation and several task forces of personnel and program managers have been assigned responsibilities in this area.

The Senior Executive Service conversion "package" was completed on January 2 and personal briefings of senior executive are being conducted by Sy Pranger.

Mr. James McElwain, Assistant Vice President, Compensation and Benefits, NCR Corporation is serving as an industry advisor to USDA in the development of a merit pay system for managers and supervisors. (Contact: Verlon Vrana, OP, ext. 75206)

CASH AWARDS UNDER THE MERIT PAY SYSTEM.....The new Civil Service Reform action provides authority to pay cash awards up to \$25,000 for employees under the merit pay system. Under this action

- The maximum award which may be paid to any employee remains \$25,000.
- The Secretary may approve awards up to \$10,000. Awards over that amount require OPM approval.
- Senior Executive Service employees could receive monetary recognition in addition to base pay as follows:

- \$20,000 for Distinguished Executive or \$10,000 for Merit Executive Rank plus
- A performance award up to \$20,000 of the basic pay rate plus
- A cash award for suggestion or performance up to \$25,000.

Total compensation for the Senior Executive Service is limited in any fiscal year to the annual pay rate of Executive Level I which is now \$66,000.

- GS-13/15 supervisors and managers could receive monetary recognition as follows:
 - Merit pay adjustments for individual performance and organizational accomplishment plus
 - A cash award for suggestion or performance up to \$25,000.

(Contact: John Kizler, OP, ext. 76977)

COMPLIANCE REVIEW OF OMB CIRCULAR A-95.....The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is beginning a Federal agency compliance review of OMB Circular A-95, Evaluation, Review and Coordination of Federal and Federally Assisted Programs and Projects. The circular establishes the procedure for State and local governments to present to Federal agencies on proposals for Federal or federally assisted projects.

The compliance review will consist of two parts; a questionnaire will be sent to all agencies whose programs and projects are subject to Circular A-95 and data related to the A-95 process will be collected from Federal Regional Councils (FRC's), and the A-95 clearinghouses. Data will include specific instances of noncompliance by Federal agencies and problems of coordinating the procedural requirements of the circular. O&F has issued a notice to the applicable agencies asking for responses to the questionnaire by January 26. (Contact: George Kirstein, O&F, ext. 75630).

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE.....Twenty representatives from eleven USDA agencies participated in a conference on facilities and real estate management on December 4, 5 and 6, 1978. The principal topics of the conference were GSA's Urban Policy and the new Executive Order on the location and management of Federal facilities (E.O. 12072); GSA's Standard Level User Charge and Chargeback System for Space; and Facilities and Access for the Handicapped. The reaction of the participants was favorable, and future conferences are planned to cover new and significant changes in the field. (Contact: James E. Wood, O&F, ext. 75225).

CASH MANAGEMENT.....O&F is developing a plan to review the cash management practices and procedures of those agencies not included in Phase I of USDA-White House Cash Management Review project. Within a few weeks, O&F will contact these agencies to request that each one provide the review team with one resource person familiar with the agency's cash management policies, practices and procedures. (Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 75630)

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE.....The Office of Safety and Health Management in cooperation with the Graduate School is offering a course on Alcohol and Drug Abuse at the Work Site. This course is designed primarily to train supervisors in the recognition and early detection of the problem drinker and drug abuser. Previous sessions of the course covering the pharmacology of alcohol, commonly abused drugs and the various treatment modalities of alcohol and drug abuse have been extremely well received. To meet the continuing demand, the course will be offered on a continuing basis.

The tuition charge of \$50 covers all course material. Nomination forms are available from the Graduate School. (Contact: Archie Hunt, OSHM, ext. 73893)

AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTIONS.....Prior to producing "qualifying" audiovisuals, USDA agencies must submit a preproduction Form 202 to the National Audiovisual Center. A "qualifying" audiovisual is one which has an expected "life" of one year or more, will have production costs exceeding \$1500 and might be used outside the producing agency. Exemptions include such items as TV newsclips, public service spots, castography, microfilm and training material so unique that it is of use only to the USDA.

The Form will be submitted to the National Audiovisual Center (NAC) through the appropriate visual division of the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs - Motion Pictures, Photography or Design. The NAC will run a computerized title search and will report back on any similar audiovisual treatments available in other government departments. The appropriate USDA agency will be responsible for determining whether the proposed audiovisual duplicates any already available on the list returned by the NAC. Where USDA agencies produce "qualifying" audiovisuals, a post-production Form 202 must be filed with NAC who will determine if they want a copy of the production for their inventory.

Details of the new requirements are in OMB Circular No. A-114; the required procedures are outlined in new GPA regulations which will be issued shortly. The NAC 202 Forms are available in agency information offices or through GPA. (Contact: Claude Gifford, GPA, ext. 78005)

1978 YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE....."Living on a Few Acres," the Department's 1978 Yearbook has been released. Secretary Bergland said the book describes both the pitfalls and satisfactions of living in the country. It is intended as a practical guide for those who do not intend to gain their principal income from the land.

The Yearbook's 48 Chapters were written primarily by specialists from the Department and State land grant universities. It covers such topics as acquiring the right location, improvements how to make the most of the land and specific articles on raising vegetables, pigs, Christmas trees and earthworms.

Copies of the 472-page Yearbook, which includes 32 pages of color photos, may be purchased for \$7 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Order by Stock number 001-000-03808-5.

STANDARDIZATION OF PAPER SIZE.....The Federal government is going to a standard stationery size of $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inches effective January 1, 1980. The measurements will apply to stationery and related materials such as letterheads, copy sets, second sheets, carbon paper, and electrostatically copied reports.

The Joint Committee on Printing has set the effective date at January 1, 1980, to enable departments to use their present stock of 8 x $10\frac{1}{2}$ stationery.

The General Services Administration will amend existing regulations or issue new ones for implementing the new standard for Federal paper size. (Contact: Claude Gifford, GPA, ext. 78005)

FISCAL YEAR 1980 BUDGET.....The President's Budget for FY 1980 will be submitted to the Congress on Monday, January 22. Departmental hearings are scheduled to begin on February 7 before the House Appropriations Subcommittee and on February 27 before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee. Agency hearings will begin mid-February in the House and early March in the Senate. These schedules are subject to change with short notice. OBP&E Notice 115 dated January 3, 1979, provides additional details. (Contact: Bob Barham, OBP&E, ext. 76176)

PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE INTERCHANGE PROGRAM.....The Department has been invited to participate in the 1979-80 President's Executive Interchange Program. This program provides the opportunity for high-potential executives from the Federal Government and the private sector to work in the opposite sector for one year. The experience helps to promote a better understanding and working relationship between business and Government, provides executives with an opportunity for professional growth by acquiring an increased knowledge of the mission, operations and methods of the opposite sector, provides for an exchange of management expertise and innovative techniques, and develops a cadre of executives with experience in both sectors who could be called to serve on Government advisory panels and in higher appointed positions.

Nominations of outstanding executives, GS-13 to GS-15, and identification of host positions, grades GS-13 to GS-15, should be submitted to the Director of Personnel no later than January 31, 1979. Additional information is available from the Office of Personnel. (Contact: Patricia J. Killen, OP, ext. 72435)

GOVERNMENTWIDE AGE DISCRIMINATION REGULATIONS.....The Age Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. On December 1, 1978, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare published proposed governmentwide regulations to implement this Act. Copies of these regulations are now being distributed in the Department and agency comments are due in OEO by February 15. (Contact: Clara McIlwain, OEO, ext. 75113)

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL SPEAKER.....Mr. James McElwain from NCR will discuss NCR's corporate compensation and appraisal program at the Management Council meeting on January 18. Mr. McElwain made an interesting presentation of this material to USDA compensation specialists and personnel officers at a Compensation Program Development Conference in December. (Contact: Ernest Toth, OP, ext. 76104)